

SEDAR8 Data Workshop  
USVI DFW COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In recent years, DFW with support from NOAA Fisheries has worked to correct data deficiencies in USVI commercial catch reports. All commercial catch reports from 1974 to 1985, and 1992 to 2003 have been entered, proofed and submitted to NOAA Fisheries.
2. NOAA Fisheries recently provided DFW with funds to re-enter and proof commercial catch reports from 1986 to 1992. This work should be completed in early CY2005. Once completed, these data files will be submitted to NOAA Fisheries.
3. In early 2004, SEAMAP-C informed DFW that data appeared to be missing from the SEAMAP USVI trap and line data file. DFW investigation revealed that about 60 percent of the data was missing from the SEAMAP USVI trap and line data file. Additional SEAMAP funds were obtained and work should be completed in earlier CY2005 to complete this data file. Once completed, these data files will be submitted to NOAA Fisheries.
4. Recently DFW completed a physical inventory of bio-statistical data hard copies. A list of survey dates was made and compared with survey dates in the NOAA Fisheries TIP database. About 40 percent of the data appears to be missing. A request was made to NOAA Fisheries to support the completion of this database (Letter from DFW to Nancy Thompson, Dec. 2004).
5. The first step in research is to conduct thorough literature searches. It is important to know what was done in the past. These should be summarized in the introduction section of any technical report.
6. It is appropriate to use complete data bases for analysis. If incomplete databases are used, the subsequent analysis and results will always be suspect. This is especially true when these results are used as a basis for fisheries management decisions. It is not appropriate to put people out of business based on incomplete data and analysis.
7. It is appropriate to get the data in order, before doing any analysis. It is a waste of limited resources to re-do analysis over and over just because databases used were not clean or complete.
8. It is not appropriate just to collect data for the sake of collecting data. Data should be used as the basis for analysis and should be the foundation for fisheries management decisions.

9. How would a fisher react if he found out that his 30 years of reports had not been looked at and not used as the basis for fisheries management?
10. NOAA Fisheries has suggested that USVI switch to a trip ticket species level catch report form. The catch report form has been modified almost 20 times in the last 30 years. Thirty years of existing catch reports have yet to be analyzed. Fishers routinely complain about the level of detail in the existing form. The linkage, application, and utility of existing data as the foundation of fisheries management needs to be clearly demonstrated to local fishers before they consider more changes to the report form.